

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 /073 W

----- 094279

R 280941Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4823

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 MONROVIA 1159

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LI, SF

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT TOLBERT'S STATEMENT ON HIS MEETING WITH VORSTER

1. SUMMARY: IN FEBRUARY 18 STATEMENT TO PRESS (TEXT FIRST  
AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 21) PRESIDENT TOLBERT JUSTIFIED HIS MEETING  
WITH VORSTER. HE NOTED CONDITIONS HE HAD LAID DOWN FOR DIALOGUE  
WITH SOUTH AFRICANS IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF JANUARY 3,  
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1972, AND SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE OF JANUARY 23, 1973. THEN HE

TRACED DEVELOPMENTS BY WHICH HE HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT NOW WAS TIME TO HEAR VORSTER'S VIEWPOINT. HE CLOSED WITH RINGING STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT "TO GO ANYWHERE AND TALK WITH ANYONE, AT THE RISK OF MY OWN LIFE, IF OUR CRITERIA ARE MET, TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PEACE, PROGRESS AND SECURITY OF OUR ONE WORLD." THIS MEETING PUTS PRESIDENT TOLBERT IN FOREFRONT WITH OTHER BLACK AFRICAN LEADERS WILLING TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE WITH SOUTH AFRICANS, AND THUS SQUARES WITH HIS AMBITIONS TO LEADING AND MEDIATING ROLE ON CONTINENT. BUT HE IS GETTING CRITICISM FROM OTHER QUARTERS, BOTH FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC; FOREIGN MINISTER DENNIS HAS ALREADY LEFT TO EXPLAIN TOLBERT'S POSITION IN VARIOUS AFRICAN CAPITALS.

2. IN FEBRUARY 18 STATEMENT TO CABINET AND PRESS PRESIDENT TOLBERT EXPLAINED HIS MOTIVATIONS AND THINKING IN CONNECTION WITH HIS MEETING WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER FEBRUARY 11 AND 12. APPARENTLY TOLBERT EXPECTED, IF HE HAD NOT ALREADY HEARD, CRITICISM FOR HIS HAVING DONE SO. HE REFERRED TO HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF JANUARY 3, 1972, AND HIS SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE OF JANUARY 23, 1973, WHEREIN HE HAD LAID DOWN HIS CRITERIA FOR CONDUCTING DIALOGUE WITH OTHER NATIONS. HIS THESIS HAD BEEN THAT "EFFECTIVENESS OF DIRECT DIALOGUE, AS A POSITIVE CATALYST FOR COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND PEACE AMONG MEN, MUST CERTAINLY BE CONTINGENT UPON MUTUAL RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AND RECIPROCAL RESPECT BETWEEN NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS UNIMPAIRED BY ABSURD ATTITUDES OF CONDESCENSION OR VAIN ILLUSIONS OF RACIAL SUPERIORITY." BUT TOLBERT NOW FOUND FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVES IN LESOTHO IN JULY AND NEW YORK IN NOVEMBER 1974 THAT SOUTH AFRICANS WANTED TO ENTER INTO DIALOGUE AS FIRST STEP IN DEALING WITH PROBLEMS OF APARTHEID AND NAMIBIA, ACCEPTED HIS CONDITIONS, AND SHOWED A GENUINE INTEREST IN PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY IN AREA. TOLBERT SAID THESE CONDITIONS INCLUDED DIALOGUE IN SOUTH AFRICA BETWEEN AND AMONG THE PEOPLES THEMSELVES. TOLBERT THEN HAD TALKS WITH ZULU CHIEF BUTHELEZI AND SWAPO LEADERS, INCLUDING SAM NOJOMO, HERE IN MONROVIA IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1975, AND THESE GENTLEMEN CONFIRMED THAT SAG HAD UNDERTAKEN DIALOGUE WITH BLACK PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY. THUS, WITH IS PRECONDITIONS MET, TOLBERT SAID, HE FELT IT HIS "DUTY TO PERMIT VORSTER TO PRESENT HIS

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SIDE TO ME."

3. AS TO TALKS THEMSELVES, TOLBERT'S STATEMENT REPORTED FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) HE HAD INSISTED THAT SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS OF SOUTH AFRICA MUST BE FOUND, "BUT ON BASIS OF EQUALITY." HE HAD EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT "SAG SHOULD RECOGNIZE RIGHT OF NAMIBIA TO INDEPENDENCE AND DEFINITELY INDICATE WHEN AND HOW

INDEPENDENCE WILL COME ABOUT." HE HAD INSISTED THAT SAG SHOULD WITHDRAW ITS POLICE AS SOON AS VIOLENCE STOPS IN ZIMBABWE.

(B) VORSTER HAD AGREED ON NEED FOR SOLUTION ON BASIS OF EQUALITY. HE HAD STATED THAT HIS BANTUSTAN POLICY IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INDEPENDENCE FOR BLACKS IN AREAS OCCUPIED BY THEM, AND SAG WOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO REMOVE ADMITTED INJUSTICES IN THIS POLICY IN STAGES. VORSTER SAID "WE DO NOT WANT AN INCH OF SOUTHWEST AFRICA'S TERRITORY AND I WOULD BE ONLY TOO PLEASED TO GET SOUTHWEST AFRICA OFF OUR BACKS." HE GAVE HIS ASSURANCE THAT POLICE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM ZIMBABWE AFTER CESSATION OF VIOLENCE BUT WARNED THAT "AFRICANS MUST HELP FORM A SOLUTION AND NOT DEMAND WHITE SURRENDER." FINALLY, VORSTER AGREED THAT WHOLE OF NAMIBIA MUST BE GIVEN INDEPENDENCE AND THAT "SAG MUST DEFINITELY INDICATE WHEN AND HOW INDEPENDENCE WILL COME ABOUT."

4. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION AFTER READING HIS STATEMENT, PRESIDENT TOLBERT, AFTER SOME HESITATION, SAID HE DID BELIEVE THAT VORSTER HAD BEEN SINCERE.

5. PARTY PAPER LIBERIAN AGE, SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVELY, ANSWERED "CRITICISM IN SOME QUARTERS ABOUT WHAT THEY TERM LIBERIA'S "FLIRTATION WITH THE APARTHEID DEVILS."" LEAD EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 21 RECALLED TOLBERT'S PAST ACHIEVEMENTS AS MEDIATOR: SECRET MISSION TO BIAFRA TO PERSUADE OJUKU TO CEASE HIS PIPE DREAM, GETTING SENGHOR AND SEKOU TOURE TOGETHER IN MONROVIA, SIMILAR EFFORTS IN VIST TO UGANDA TO RECONCILE AMIN AND NYERERE. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THERE ARE THOSE WHO STILL ARGUE FOR TIGHTENED SANCTIONS, EDITORIAL CONCLUDES THAT "IF TOLBERT-VORSTER DIALOGUE CAN HASTEN THESE DREAMS (OF LIBERATION, EMPTYING OF JAILS, END OF RACISM) INTO REALIZATION, THEN LIBERIA'S PLACE IN AFRICA'S SUN CONTINUES TO SHINE BRIGHTLY." LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

6. DESPITE CRITICISM OF HIS TALKING WITH VORSTER BEFORE  
SITUATION OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA HAD MATERIALLY CHANGED,  
TOLBERT CONTINUES TO EXTOL TALK AS A MEANS OF OVERCOMING PROBLEMS,  
HE SAYS HE WILL REMOVE ANY BARRIER TO PEACE, BREAK  
ANY WALL THAT DIVIDES, BUILD ANY BRIDGE NEEDED TO UNITE  
MANKIND, AND "GO ANYWHERE AND TALK WITH ANYONE, AT RISK OF MY  
OWN LIFE, IF OUR CRITERIA ARE MET, TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE,  
PROGRESS AND SECURITY OF OUR ONE WORLD." NEVERTHELESS, HE  
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CAREFULLY LEAVES IT OPEN THAT HE HAS NOT OPENED A DIALOGUE;  
HE HAS MERELY HEARD VORSTER AND STATED HIS OWN CONDITIONS FOR  
A DIALOGUE. THIS SUBTLE DISTINCTION (WHICH TOLBERT IN PRIVATE  
CONVERSATION MADE EXPLICIT TO MILMISH CHIEF COL. BUCKNER) WAS  
APPARENTLY LOST ON OR IGNORED BY A NUMBER OF CRITICS, INCLUDING  
SOME FOREIGN LEADERS, E.G., SEKOU TOURE, AND DOMESTIC  
POTENTATES, E.G., BIG MAC DESHIELD. THEY SEE NO GOOD WHATEVER  
IN EVEN TALKING TO SAG BEFORE IT REFORMS ITS PAST POLICIES.  
TOLBERT WANTS TO PUT HIMSELF IN MEDIATING AND LEADERSHIP ROLE

PROMOTING DIALOGUE WITH SAG. AT SAME TIME, HE DOES NOT WANT  
TO GET TOO FAR WAY FROM AFRICAN CONSENSUS. PRESUMABLY FONMIN  
DENNIS IS MAKING APPROPRIATE EXPLANATIONS IN HIS TOUR OF  
VARIOUS AFRICAN CAPITALS.  
MANFULL

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